



SAGA Snippets

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That Old Familiar Feeling

by Sheriff Jim Wilson
27 February 2024

As a young man, I used to wonder why so many gunmen still preferred to carry the Colt single-action revolver. Frank Hamer, General George Patton and a whole bunch of lesser-known shootists relied on the old Colt for years after, in my humble opinion, better guns were available.

And of course, the classic example is the 1911 semi-automatic ... over 100 years old and still being relied upon by savvy gun-toters. Now, don't get me wrong, both of those guns are iconic American handguns and I'd be a fool to knock their history and their service. But why? Aren't we building better guns today?

Of course, time and experience gave me the answer. We tend to stick to guns that we shoot well, especially when those same guns have gotten us out of a tight spot or two. When your life has been on the line, it's hard to quit winners.

Elmer Keith and Jeff Cooper both admonished folks to live with their guns. In my view, that means to carry, handle and shoot a particular gun until its management becomes second nature. In a bad situation our focus will be on the threat and trying to figure out what to do about it. It helps to be armed with a gun that we know so well that looking at it and thinking about it is completely unnecessary. And that ability comes with living with the gun.

All of that is far more important than what kind of gun a person chooses to carry, as long as it is a gun of decent quality.

I not only need to be adept in shooting the gun, I need to know what malfunctions are common with that gun and have experience dealing with them. It would also be important to know the safety issues of that type of gun and how to avoid these problems. Can I field strip it for cleaning and maintenance? And what is the proper maintenance for my particular choice of defense gun?

When your front door crashes in at 2 in the morning, you need to be able to grab your defensive gun and take care of business. When that armed robber gets in your face, you don't need to be thinking about how to run the gun in your hand, you need to be dealing with the threat. The decision to shoot should always be a conscious decision; managing the gun should be a subconscious function.

Such realizations and choices don't happen overnight. They come from years of experience and the fact that a particular kind of defensive firearm just suits you. That's what living with your gun really means.

<https://www.shootingillustrated.com/content/that-old-familiar-feeling/>

SAGA Snippets
February 2024

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- *What to Consider when Buying a Full-Sized Gun safe*

Precision Shooting Versus Defensive Shooting

by George Harris
5 March 2024

The Problem

You recently attended a concealed-carry class in which you shot a lot of ammunition—almost 500 rounds—over a two-day period. The thrust of the class was staying on the sights with hard eye focus and a slow, continuous trigger squeeze from a rigid shooting stance. Shooting tiny groups repetitively seemed to be the overall objective. You believed defensive types of shooting, with speed superseding accuracy, would be more applicable to a concealed-carry class. You know that marksmanship is important, but shouldn't precision shooting and defensive shooting be addressed and defined as two different types of shooting with dissimilar outcomes?

The Solution

Marksmanship is defined as skill in shooting. The objective of shooting could be defined as hitting the intended target on demand, when and where the shooter desires.

The application, for which one is training, really dictates whether the focus would be on absolute precision placement of a bullet on target or in an area that would accomplish the desired result.

In reality, the primary reason responsible citizens carry a concealed firearm is for personal defense. When considering the likely scenarios where one might have to produce and use a firearm in self-defense, some common factors come up. Criminal attacks tend to be close-proximity, short-duration events where speed in putting bullets on target is more important than the precise placement of the bullet or bullets on the target (although keeping all rounds on target is vital). Seeing a sharp, crisp sight picture with a slow, steady trigger squeeze will likely bring you to the party a bit late to be effective.

When all things are considered, the target area of an attacker is similar in size to that of an 8-inch paper plate and the anticipated



engagement distance is measured in feet rather than yards. In an instance such as this, speed trumps precision, provided the hits are realized in the target.

Also, consider the heightened state of excitement and physiological factors that occur in a defensive confrontation that has escalated to the potential of lethal force. Scientific studies suggest that the eyes will likely be on the object of threat—the criminal's gun, knife or some other weapon—not on the sights. What this leaves us with is utilizing our natural eye/hand coordination and natural ability to point to get the muzzle of the gun pointed at the target area. Since the hands usually will go where the eyes are looking, with the gun as an extension of the hands, just holding and possibly seeing the outline of the gun hovering within the outline of the target while operating the trigger is likely to put shots where they are needed to stop the hostile action.

Understanding the application and training necessary to maximize the utilization of one's natural abilities will go a long way to achieving success in a dire situation.

Precision shooting may have a place in defensive applications, but it occupies a narrow space when all things are considered.

Furthermore, it is a given that there are exceptions to the circumstances one may face in a defensive confrontation. But, the overwhelming



Continued...Precision Shooting Versus Defensive Shooting

data indicate that the likelihood of having to make or being able to make multiple precision-type shots to eliminate an imminent threat is extremely rare.

Some additional food for thought might be the realization that it is unlikely either you or the criminal(s) attacking you—yes, there may be multiple—will be stationary, in a shooting stance, during a conflict. If there is sufficient distance to need the sights for precision shots, escape might be a better option rather than risking injury or death.

Run through the potential scenarios in which you may find yourself—given your lifestyle and locale—in your mind and practice avoidance if possible. If avoidance is not an option, have a plan. With the information provided, it should not be hard for you to decide where you should spend your time and money in the pursuit of your shooting endeavors.

<https://www.shootingillustrated.com/content/precision-shooting-versus-defensive-shooting/>



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Living With Them

by Sheriff Jim Wilson
3 March 2024

As I got ready to go out this morning, I slipped on my canvas brush jacket and put on my silverbelly hat. And, as an integral part of my morning routine, I stuffed a Smith & Wesson 21/2-inch Model 19 into my belt. I got to thinking about the column that I wrote last week [See page 1] that included the admonishment to live with your defense guns and this compact revolver sure fit that bill.

Many moons ago, as a young peace officer, I discovered the Model 19 revolver and found that I shot it pretty well. I've never been without one since then and particularly get along well with the 21/2-inch version. A pair of them have lived with me for years, sporting pinned barrels, recessed cylinders, smooth magna stocks and grip adapters. Extra ammo is carried in HKS speed loaders and Bianchi speed strips.

Not being monogamous, I have also had a long-term relationship with the Commander-size 1911 pistol. One old friend is a Colt lightweight that has had Novak fixed sights added, with a gold bead in the front and a trigger job. The Colt also wears a set of custom silver stocks with my badge in the center of each panel. My newest is a Border Special from Nighthawk Custom which I had a hand in designing. It, too, wears combat fixed sights with a gold bead on the front sight.

Through the years, I've certainly shot and tested many defensive guns, revolver and semi-automatics, but these are the two designs that I always come back to for my personal use. They are like old friends, and we have seen some rough, dangerous times together. I give the revolvers the edge for accuracy while the Commanders get the nod as pure fighting guns.



I was fortunate to have had good advice from old Rangers, other lawmen and gun-fighters not only about gun selection, but about using them when the chips were down. Col. Jeff Cooper's teachings were also a great help. I tried to listen and remember when my elders were speaking.

It all comes together when you combine quality guns with the commitment to shoot them often and a lot. As time goes by, and it does take time, a fella will settle on guns that just suit him. The proof is in how accurately and how quickly one can get lead in the air.

I'm not, for one minute, suggesting that my choice should be your choice. Just know that the selection process takes time and commitment. Once you've been down that road, you'll find that it's hard to quit winners.

<https://www.shootingillustrated.com/content/living-with-them/>



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5 Gun-Handling Blanket Statements, Folded



https://www.nrafamily.org/content/5-gun-handling-blanket-statements-folded/?utm_source=newsletter

by Frank Melloni

13 February 2024

If you're new to shooting, there is probably nothing more reassuring than a good old blanket statement when you ask a question. Some of the things you'll learn can be confusing at first, and having to learn an entirely new set of information can be difficult. Whittling it down to a few simple concepts always makes things easier, so why not? Well, the truth is, few topics are cut-and-dried in the world of firearms. Many questions require a thorough explanation to help the asker make the right decision. The problem is, not many folks are qualified to have that discussion, so they resort to snappy answers that don't truly address the question. Here are five blanket statement answers that always make me roll my eyes.

1. Rifles have more recoil than handguns.

I get in trouble at gun stores quite a bit. I love to browse new shops, as it helps me to keep a pulse on the market and engage with prospective gun owners to get an idea of what the current trends are, as well as what new gun owners are going through. Invariably, I'll hear someone ask the guy behind the counter which platform has more recoil, and if

their response only has one word in it, I chime in ... and sometimes get asked to leave. Most tend to say that rifles have more recoil, while some say pistols do.

The answer is (and almost always is) "It depends." Instead of the platform, it's better to turn your attention to the chamberings. A massive rifle chambered in .22LR will have the recoil of a BB gun, whereas a tiny revolver chambered in .357 Magnum can have enough kick to cause pain to the shooter. Let what it fires drive your decision, and don't be afraid of a little extra mass on the gun, as that soaks up recoil through basic physics. (Trust the science!)

2. X brand ammo is more accurate than Y brand.

Just like almost every other product on the market, ammo comes in quality tiers. The only way to compare any two brands is to be familiar with those tiers, and compare apples to apples. If you take one company's match-grade load and put it up against another's practice load, the takeaway shouldn't be that the first company makes a better overall product.

Furthermore, accuracy is a relationship between a firearm and the ammunition inside. The only way to tell what will group best in a given gun is to try multiple brands and styles of ammo. I've had guns do better with Federal's low-price American Eagle load than its Gold Medal Match load. Knowing that, it's foolish to believe you can make any statement at all regarding accuracy other than "X is good in this firearm because I've shot it; I don't know about Y."

3. Buy an X-branded firearm; Y makes junk.

I don't care what company or in what industry; I can guarantee that in its history, it's made a few missteps. Those missteps are enough to scar some customers for life. However, even through that given manufacturer's "dark" times, I bet they managed to hold together at least one stellar fail-safe product.



Continued...5 Gun-Handling Blanket Statements, Folded

Gun makers are no different, and you cannot hold an entire brand accountable for one period of time or a few flops.

Times change, management changes and processes change. Add it up, and it points back to more research. If you have something in mind, read all the reviews you can find on it, search that model plus the word "recall," and ask around to see if somebody you know has one and uses it regularly.

4. Rifle shooting is easier than pistol shooting (or vice versa).

I instruct both platforms, and again, it depends. Maybe not so much on the firearms, but more on the shooter, their eyesight and target distance. If a student is okay with math and they are more comfortable perched at a shooting bench or lying on the ground, odds are they are going to do better with a rifle than a pistol. If a student is more athletic and enjoys moving and solving problems on their feet, then pistol shooting is likely more up their alley. At the end of the day, if you're interested in shooting, try as many different disciplines and firearms as you can before you decide which will come most naturally.

5. X cartridge has more "stopping power" than Y cartridge.

I'll save my disdain for the phrase "stopping power" for another piece, so let's just focus on the comparison part of that statement. Throwing the half-baked pseudo measurement aside, let's replace it with something more quantitative: muzzle energy.

This number comes from a formula involving the projectile weight and how fast it's moving. As a fast-moving, lightweight bullet can have more energy than a big, slow one, saying things like ".45 ACP is more powerful than 9mm Luger" isn't always true. I've had plenty of test cases where the opposite was the case, especially if the larger one is fired from a shorter barrel. The answer lies within a chronograph, as it can measure the speed of the bullet leaving your gun. Then, a simple online converter can do the math for you; just plug in the numbers.

All that said, there is one blanket statement upon which you can bet your life:
ALWAYS Keep The Gun Pointed In A Safe Direction;
ALWAYS Keep Your Finger Off The Trigger Until Ready To Shoot; and
ALWAYS Keep The Gun Unloaded Until Ready To Use.

NOTE: Our apology that this February 2024 issue of Snippets is being released late.



What to Consider When Buying a Full-Sized Gun Safe

<https://www.nrawomen.com/content/what-to-consider-when-buying-a-full-sized-gun-safe/>

by Jo Deering
25 January 2024

When it comes to keeping firearms secured from unauthorized use and from fire and theft, there's no substitute (OK, except for maybe a walk-in vault room) for a good full-sized gun safe. There are myriad options on the market with a vast range of prices and features. How do you know what you need? What should you consider? Well, budget is a driving factor for most of us, but within your budget, you should understand the following features and considerations.

Capacity: First, how many guns do you want the safe to hold? Will it be mostly long guns, handguns or a good mix of both? Keep in mind that although a safe might say it will hold 32 long guns, rifles with scopes on them take up the space of two long guns, so that 32-long-gun safe will only hold about 16 scoped rifles. Generally, the larger the capacity, the more expensive the safe.

Organization: While you're thinking about the guns you're going to put in the safe, consider the interior organization, particularly if you plan to use it for a lot of handguns. In that case, you'll want a door-mounted organizer/pocket system and lots of shelves rather than a tall, empty space meant just for long guns. Many full-size safes come with adjustable, removable shelves so you can customize the interior to your liking.

The Floor: Sticking with the interior topic, a sales associate at a sporting goods store gave me an excellent tip when I bought my first full-sized gun safe. Look for one with a flat, flush floor, he said—if you can avoid it, you don't want a lip sticking up where the door meets the floor. Stocks and barrels have a tendency to bang themselves on that lip when you're getting guns in and out. One of my safes has a lip and one does not; I use gun socks to protect my muzzles and buttstocks from dings and dents. This feature is not a deal-breaker by any means, but it's nice to know.

Materials: Good gun safes are pretty much all made from pieces of steel welded together. How many pieces (and therefore how many welds) determine the strength of the safe—you'll commonly find five-piece, three-piece or two-piece construction. The fewer pieces/welds, the stronger and therefore more expensive the safe (because welds are a potential weak spot where a thief might be able to peel the safe open). In addition, higher-gauge (thicker) steel is stronger and more expensive than lower-gauge steel. When dealing with steel gauge, the smaller the number, the thicker the steel. You're most likely to see 7-gauge through 14-gauge steel used in gun safes. All are good steel, but the smaller/thicker, the stronger it will be.

Hinges: Safes come with either internal or external hinges. There are some exceptions to this, and it depends on the overall quality and construction of the safe, but in general, external hinges tend to be weaker but offer the big advantage of being able to open the safe door a full 180 degrees. Internal hinges allow for a narrower opening but leave less of a potential weak spot for a burglar to attempt to break. They also tend to be found on more high-end safes. In addition to internal vs. external, consider where you're going to put the safe and in which direction you want the door to swing, hence which side you need the hinges on.

Locking Mechanism: For the most part, safes come with two methods of locking (not the lock itself; we'll get to that in a second). Most common are thick round bolts that come out of the door and insert into the frame. Less commonly, you might see locking bars in some safes. Locking bars work similarly, but in the best cases, they are a solid piece of steel rather than welded- or screwed-together pieces like round bolts usually are. Therefore, when done properly, good locking bars are stronger than good or average round bolts.

Electronic vs Manual Locks: There are three main options for getting your safe open: Biometric locks, electronic keypad locks, and manual/mechanical locks. Mechanical locks—with a dial like you used on your high-school locker—are traditional and secure.



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They're also considerably slower to use than a biometric or keypad lock, and if you forget the combination or ever want to change it, you'll need to hire a locksmith. And of course, if you've got a touch of conspiracy theorist in you, you might like that a manual device cannot be hacked.

Digital keypad and biometric locks, on the other hand, are extremely fast to operate. As electronic devices, they do require batteries and are arguably more subject to malfunction. A digital keypad lock will typically come with a key in case the battery dies; you can remove the keypad and reveal a keyhole underneath that lets you into your safe. You can change the combination any time you like, and some safe companies retain a master code or other way to get into your safe if you somehow get yourself hopelessly locked out. Biometric locks are gaining in popularity, but reliability is not 100 percent (how many times has your iPhone failed to recognize your fingerprint on the first try?). Their major benefit is how quick they are to use and their ability to limit access to authorized users.

Fire Rating: A safe's fire rating tells you, at least in theory, how long the internal temperature of the safe will remain below the specified temperature. Lots of factors will affect this in reality, however, so take all fire ratings with a grain of salt. A fire rating of "UL 350 2-Hr" means the interior of the safe should remain at or below 350 degrees for two hours. Electronics and photos will be ruined past 150 degrees; paper is supposed to be good to 350 degrees, but this is not a guarantee. Guns vary based on their materials, but in general, firearms should be OK at 350 degrees, but just because a safe says it will maintain 350 degrees does not mean it actually will. Be aware that these ratings are largely unregulated, and guns can be damaged or ruined inside any safe depending on conditions.

In general, no safe is fireproof; they are only fire resistant, and only to a certain temperature for a certain time. I recommend at least a 350-degree, 1-hour fire rating; longer and hotter if you can afford it.

How Will You Get It Home and Where Will You Put It?

Full-sized, steel gun safes are heavy. I vote for home delivery when possible, but make sure you know what delivery covers—many retailers or manufacturers will deliver a safe to your door and then it's up to you to get it inside, which might or might not be particularly helpful. If you have a trailer and a hand truck and some strong friends to help you, you can pick up a safe and bring it home and install it yourself.

Decide where it's going to go, keeping in mind the extreme weight. Any stand-up gun safe, especially once it's full of firearms, is going to put a substantial load on your floor that might not be designed to support it. A concrete slab is ideal, but keep in mind that you don't want a very hot and humid area and freezing temps aren't great either, so a garage or unfinished basement is probably not the best spot. A climate-controlled area is what you're looking for. If your house is built on a concrete slab, you're in luck—the safe can go anywhere you want directly on that slab (i.e., not on the second story). If you have a crawl space or basement under your living space, place the safe on the first floor of your home next to a load-bearing wall, preferably an exterior one so you're at one of the stronger points of the floor joists. You want to span as many joists as possible, perpendicular to the way the joists run, and you do not want this heavy load sitting at the midpoint of your joists, which is why interior walls are not the best option. Consider adding a steel support beam/jack or other means of supporting the floor under the safe.

Sagging floors and structural issues are no joke, so consult a builder or an engineer if you have to in order to protect your floor and your home. Anchoring the safe to the floor or, less optimally, the wall, is a good idea for theft protection, and many safes come with pre-drilled holes that make this easier.

Throw some dehumidifier rods, a bucket of DampRid or some other form of desiccant in there as a cheap form of protection from humidity and you're good to go.